

A Walking Tour of Galva, IL

Information updated in
Observance of the
150th Anniversary of the
founding of Galva, Illinois
October 25, 1854

Information compiled from
George Swank's Galvaland Magazine

Galva, Illinois

William L. Wiley and his cousin James Wiley founded Galva October 25, 1854. They lived in Brimfield and traveled the staked-out line of the CB&Q railroad by wagon. They were struck with the fertility of the section, which is now Galva and felt it would be an ideal spot to build a city. At a conference with the railroad officials, the Wiley's were successful in having the point designated as a stop for the railroad. A flag was placed at the location of the new station.

(1) William L. Wiley **903 W. Division Street**

William L Wiley was born at Saxton's River, Vermont, November 10, 1820. He came to Illinois in 1851. He was the first president of the First National Bank of Galva, and for several years he was a director and Vice President of the Peoria and Rock Island Railroad. He was a member of the Baptist church for over 50 years. He was a staunch Republican, and was a delegate to the convention that first nominated Grant for president. For many years he was president of the Galva Board of Education. His home was the fifth home on the north side of West Division Street. William L. Wiley died in 1900 in this home. His first wife, Louise Bailey, died in 1862. He married Eunice B. Williams in 1864. He had 3 children, one by his first wife and two by the second. He married his third wife, Kate in 1895; she remained there until 1931. The architectural beauty of the home was lost when the upper portion was removed after it was purchased by Reverend D.A. Bloomster about 1951. Now open to the public as the Wiley House Museum. Open Mon., Tues., Fri., Sat. & 1st Sun of month 11 a.m. – 4 p.m., closed 1st Sat. of month, or call (309) 932-8992 for an appointment.

(2) George Rodney Wiley **SW 2nd Street & SW 8th Avenue**

George Rodney Wiley, nephew of William L. Wiley. In 1875 this was the G. Wiley residence on Rockingham Street. Later the house was divided and the northwest portion was moved several rods east.

James M. Wiley

One of the founders of Galva; his home was located on the south side of West Division, west of 10th Avenue. He owned property on both sides of the street; the exact location of his home is unknown, but it is believed to be in the 1000 block on the south side of West Division Street. Born in Rockingham, Vermont January 23, 1817, he came to Illinois in 1838 and made his living in real estate. His third wife was Lizzie S. Yocum. He had seven children, five by his first wife and two by the second. He died March 1886.

(3) E.K. Hayes

16 NW 6th Avenue

This was the E.K. Hayes home, which was built in 1889. E.K. Hayes died in 1903; he founded the Hayes Pump and Planter Company (on the site of the former Galva Foundry). The Hayes heirs sold the home to H.S. Dickinson in 1930. Later it was converted into apartments and had several owners. Mrs. Earl L. Yocum and June Berry occupied an apartment there until 1967. In 1979 James K. Sloan opened a day care center in this home and he erected a wooden fence that replaced the original iron fence. The iron fence had been removed to aid the war effort early in WWII; it was used for scrap. It is the current home of Jack Cathelyn.

(4) Wiley

504 W Division Street

Built in 1866-68, this was originally a Wiley home. Edward I. Seeley and his bride, the former Maude V. Olson, moved here in 1899. When Edward drowned in 1901, Maude moved out. He was the son of Isaac B. Seeley, Galva's first druggist. Maude returned to the home in 1936 and lived there until 1956. F.U. White also lived in the home for 18 years. It is the current home of William Frisby.

(5) J.W. Dexter

416 W Division Street

In 1908 this was the home of J.W. Dexter, one of the last surviving Civil War veterans. It is now the D.E. Buck home.

(6) Dr. B.S. Peck

416 NW 1st Street

(Berg Apartments)

This home was built by Dr. B.S. Peck, a well-known physician who helped organize the Galva State Bank and prior to that was in the dry goods business. He died in 1920 at the age of 75.

(7) Emery Home

506 NW 1st Street

In 1855 Galva Emery, the first child born in Galva, was born on this site. She only lived 10 years, dying on September 13, 1865. The foundation of the original home remains; it serves as a heater room. Jacob Emery, a relative of Galva Emery, built this larger home. The home has an open stairway in the front hall with a parlor leading off the hallway and with a sitting room in back of the parlor. A bedroom was reached from the sitting room, while the kitchen was in the rear. It is the current home of John Simmons.

(8) Dyer Ford

415 NW 2nd Street

Dyer Ford erected this home; he was an official of the Galva State Bank and had other business enterprises. He was active in the Congregational Church. It was the home and office of Dr. Marian Blust, and is now owned by J.B. Hopping.

(9) W.O. Houghton
505 NW 2nd Street

This was the home of W.O. Houghton, son of E.W. Houghton. He continued in lumber business for 46 years as president and was highly active in the community. His daughter Helen married Hayes J. Arter; and his grandson, Warren Arter lives in the home now and continued the family business.

(10) Wiley Park

Wiley Park was originally named College Park. The original bandstand was erected in 1885 and first used in August of that year. It was toppled by a cyclone seven years later, but there was little damage. It was replaced by the present structure in 1963.

(11) 511 NW 2nd Street

Sometimes referred to as the Elizabeth Doye house. This was the home of Clifford Steer, son of Elon Steer until 1915. Elon Steer built 43 blocks of sidewalk in 1905, in 1909 he built the concrete works around the North School at a cost of 12 ³/₄ cents per square foot. It is currently the Dan Rux home.

(12) Philip P. Williams
517 NW 2nd Street

This home was erected in 1897. It was the home of Philip P. Williams. He was a fireman in 1895 and was in the Galva Military Band in 1918. Mr. and Mrs. Williams observed their 50th wedding anniversary in this home in 1937. This was the Pepperdine property before the William's owned it. The barn was converted in 1978 and still has a hayloft. This was also the home of Don J. Best after the depression in which he lost his home on NW 4th Avenue. It is now the David Taylor home.

(13) McFadden
203 NW 6th Avenue

This was the B.P. McFadden home. McFadden ran a restaurant in Galva in 1916 on 329 Market Street in the BP McFadden building, which he built. This is currently the home of Joe Conner.

(14) Andrew E. Anderson
214 NW 6th Avenue

This was the home of Andrew E. Anderson. He was a banker in Bishop Hill and later at the Yocum Bank. A Swedish Bible published in 1617-18 was presented to the Bishop Hill Heritage Association in 1966, after the death of Mrs. A.E. Anderson. It had been in the Anderson family many years and was brought to Bishop Hill from Sweden by Jons Anderson, grandfather of Andrew. Originally it was a church bible in Vasteras, Sweden. This is currently the home of Terry Anderson.

(15) Thomas Brownlee
218 NW 6th Avenue

Thomas Brownlee built this home. It was built prior to the one to the north.

(16) Thomas Brownlee
304 NW 6th Avenue

This home was built by Thomas Brownlee who built the building at 114 N. Exchange Street where Coast to Coast was. He ran Brownlee & Stoddard Dry Goods in the late 1800's and was also a farmer. His first wife, Sarah McDonnell died in 1849. They had three children. He married his second wife, Elizabeth Coupland in 1852; they had five children. It is currently the home of Larry Varner.

(17) F.F. McCutchen
310 NW 6th Avenue

The Frank F. McCutchen home was built in 1898. He was in the clothing business in Galva from 1890 – 1908. McCutchen Bros Clothing was located at 346 Front Street in the Opera House Block and was also located at the south end of the Hotel for a time at 232-234 S Exchange Street. In the garage of his home, he tacked up a license plate for every year beginning in 1914, creating a colorful and interesting design. It is currently the Ron Nordstrom home.

(18) Arthur F. Hathaway
318 NW 6th Avenue

Arthur F. Hathaway purchased this home in 1883. It was erected in 1865. He was the first lumber dealer in Galva and one of the earliest settlers and a town trustee. A.F. Hathaway selected the site of the Galva Cemetery in 1858. There was considerable opposition on account of the distance from town. He had a fast horse and little trouble converting the opposition. Jack Hathaway, a great grandson of A.F. Hathaway now resides in the home.

(19) Olof Lock
404 NW 6th Avenue

Olof and Lottie Lindstrum Lock, former Bishop Hill colonists resided in this home. Their daughter Emily married Thomas Monier in this home in 1932; they continued to reside there after Mrs. Lock's death. This is now the Bob Donaldson home.

(20) Thompson Home
602 NW 5th Street

Built by John Franklin Thompson, this was one of the earliest residences. Thompson was the great-great grandfather of the president resident, Dale Smith. The house has remained in the family with the exception of the years Robert Hunter owned it. Smith's sister purchased it after Hunter's death. It was also the home of Smith's grandparents Mr. & Mrs. Urban Smith.

(21) R. Frank Bailey
512 NW 4th Street

This is the second house on this site, both built by R. Frank Bailey who came to Galva in 1857. The first was a frame dwelling, but a few years later, in 1865, Mr. Bailey decided to replace it with a more elegant brick residence. The original house was moved one block southwest. Frank Bailey was in the hardware and dry goods business in Galva. He was a partner in Hainline & Bailey Hardware on Front Street and his dry goods firms were Lynd & Bailey and Bailey & Ford.

In the late 1880's the home was purchased by John H. Best who established John H. Best & Sons factory. Mr. Best sold it to John N. Morgan in 1894 and the Merle Morgan's lived there for several years also. Mrs. Rosellyn Kelly Millis purchased the home in 1943, she resided in the home and Fern Matson lived in an upstairs apartment. It is currently the home of Mark Rasmussen.

(22) Randolph Boyd
504 NW 4th Street

Randolph Boyd, a salesman built this large home in 1903. His wife was the former Fannie Rockefeller. He resided there 41 years until his death in 1944. Mr. Boyd served 18 years in the Illinois Legislature, the last several as a Senator. The home then became the property of Randolph Boyd's niece, Alice Boyd Best (Mrs. Leon). Leon Best was the son of John H. Best. It became the property of Rebecca Best Ovitz after her mother's death. In 1981 it was sold out of the family it had been in for 78 years. It is currently the home of Kevin Gerard.

(23) Jonas Erickson
420 NW 4th Street

This home was built about 1865 by Jonas Erickson, a Bishop Hill Colony trustee; and in 1898 it became the property of Manuel E. Erickson. Three years later, Dr. H. W. Waterous purchased the home and lived there with his wife and four children. He established his practice in Galva in 1893. The Waterous family lived there until 1930 when he retired. Fred Lord, Sr. purchased the home in 1951. It is currently the home of Sheri Aufderheide.

(24) V. A. Wygren
418 NW 4th Street

Victor A. Wygren built this home in 1892 and it remained in the Wygren family almost 60 years. Features of the home were oak and walnut floors, gas light fixtures, and walnut beam in library. Evan Johnson purchased it in 1951. Victor Wygren came to Galva in 1882 and was originally a clerk for Herdien Coal Company. His banking career covered nearly half a century, retiring as Vice President of First National Bank in 1934. It is the present home of Todd Hagerty.

(25) Ezra S. Dean
412 NW 4th Street

This home was erected by Ezra S. Dean and his wife, the former Marian Hobley. Ezra Dean had been a farmer in Cambridge Township. Billy Sunday and his wife were guests in this home during his 1904 evangelistic campaign in Galva. Miss Ada Hobley, the last surviving member of the family, occupied the home until her death in 1943. It was then purchased by Attorney Reynolds M. Everett, Sr., now occupied by Attorney Reynolds M. Everett, Jr.

(26) Olof Johnson
408 NW 4th Street

Olof Johnson, born in Sweden in 1820, erected this home in 1863. He was a Bishop Hill trustee. He named the town "Gavle" after his native home in 1854. It was never pronounced correctly in English and finally the orthography was changed to "Galva". The Johnson's and their three daughters, Olive, Christine, and Lily moved into the home in 1863; Olof died there 7 years later, on July 17, 1870. His wife Christine continued to live there until her death in 1895. Olof Krans did the painting and papering for \$2.25 per day. A large cucumber magnolia tree on the east side of the home was the largest of its kind in Illinois. Olof planted the tree shortly after building the home. (The tree sustained damage from a storm and had to be cut down). The house, now placed on the Register of Historic Places, is described as modified Italian architecture with cross gable design and double bracketing under the eaves. Especially impressive are the parlor and formal dining room with marble mantle and fireplace with cast iron metal front pieces.

The barn, northwest of the home was moved from the lot in 1962. The barn had hand-hewn timbers, joined by wooden pegs, which still had some of the bark remaining on them.

Thomas H. Hobley purchased the property in 1908 and lived there with his sister, Miss Ada Hobley. The house was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. G.H. Overbaugh from the Hobley estate in 1943, and it remained in that family for 31 years. It is now the Ed Muncaster home. A period style carriage house has recently been added.

(27) Dr. Frank W. Lupfer

516 NW 4th Avenue

This was the home of Dr. Frank W. Lupfer, a 1907 veterinarian who practiced in Galva for over 40 years. His office was the location of the Market Street Café, which is presently a part of McKay's.

Jog in the Road

This jog in the road designates the Southeast edge of the Galva Heights. A 1911 ad reads as follows: "Lots \$300 to \$525. \$5 down, \$1.50-\$2.00 per week. 10% cash discount on all sales. Warranty deed and abstract furnished with each lot." No houses to be built on these lots costing less than \$2000, and plans are being made for several new houses to cost from \$3000 to \$5000! 57 lots of which 29 sold the first day. The first 5 homes on which work started December 1911 were priced at \$3000 and were described as "modern in every respect".

(28) "Slats" Hudson

616 NW 4th Avenue

"Slats" Hudson once occupied this home. He was a barber in the basement of the Galva Furniture Store building located at 336 Front St. for 56 years, starting there in 1906 and retiring in 1962. This is the present home of Frank Prosser.

(29) Harry C. Williams

618 NW 4th Avenue

Built by Harry C. Williams, the son of John Williams of the Famous Store. Purchased in 1930 by C.A. Peterson and later became the home of his son Leonard R. Peterson who sold it to Arthur Zelnio. In 1967 Levi Nye bought the house then sold it to Neil Johnson in 1984. It is currently the home of Kim Ballard.

(30) Walter B. Crawford

710 NW 4th Avenue

This was the home of Walter B. Crawford, he was a Burlington Railroad agent for 50 years before retiring in 1964. He was in the railroad tower in 1892, the night the cyclone hit Galva. He was 15 years old at the time. He and J.J. Lord clung to the levers to brace themselves if the tower went over. It held, but the brick round house nearby and many other buildings were destroyed. It is currently the home of Doug Boock.

(31) G.H. Overbaugh

716 NW 4th Avenue

G.H. Overbaugh operated Galva Farm Equipment Company. He had previously managed the Galva branch of the Oneida Hardware Company. It is currently the home of Sheldon Dornink.

(32) H.O. Hartley

720 NW 4th Avenue

This was the home of H.O. Hartley, a Galva Druggist in 1912. His drug store was at 358 Front St., the site of the former Galva Pharmacy. In 1924 the drug store and home were both purchased by Mr. & Mrs. Franz Peterson who both lived there until his death in 1943. She continued to live there until her death. It is currently the home of Jeff Kaiser.

(33) 812 NW 4th Avenue

This home was built by Earl L. Yocum for his Mother-in-Law. It is now the home of Art Apfel.

(34) Earl L. Yocum

400 NW 9th Street

Earl L. Yocum erected this home in 1917-18. It is a 20-room home on 3 ½ acres. Mae Yocum lived in the home until its sale in 1956; Earl Yocum died in 1946. Mae Yocum moved into an apartment in the Hayes home. When Harold Donahue purchased the home in 1956, he established a nursing home in it. It was then sold to Earl Jehling in 1957 who operated Jehling Nursing Home. It closed in 1962 and was made into apartments owned by Jim Murray. It is now the single-family residence of James Jeanblanc.

(35) Don J. Best

723 NW 4th Avenue

This was the home of Don J. Best, son of John H. Best of the Best Factory. He lost this house in the depression. It was also the Burton & Gertrude King residence until his death in 1980 and hers in 1993. Burton was an agronomist and Western IL Farm Mgmt Services field man. It is currently the Jim Wrigley home.

(36) E.L. Brown

409 NW 4th Avenue

E.L. Brown, president of Galva Electric & Light Company built this home in 1914. The house was originally located on the east side of SW 6th Avenue, opposite the Hayes factory which became the Galva Foundry. It was move to the present location.

(37) Hugh Baird

317 NW 4th Avenue

This was the home of Hugh Baird, he was a cashier at the Bishop Hill Bank. He owned a grocery store from 1903-1917 located at 128 N. Exchange St. in the north end of Ben Franklin, now the location of Humphrey Construction. He died in 1951 at the age of 77. His daughter Mynette Barlow lived in the house following his death. It is currently the home of Mrs. Richard Barlow.

(38) Methodist Church

217 NW 4th Avenue

(38a) 18 SE 5th Street

Erected in 1857 as the Methodist Church; it was used as a house of worship for 25 years. An 1886 new item states: "John Pearson has moved a part of the old Methodist Church to the South side (of Galva) and will soon have another handsome dwelling made of it." The portion of the house that was moved is located at 18 SE 5th Street. The residence of John Pearson was later the home of Earle W. Mundy. The part that remained on the old site has been made into a beautiful 12-room home and has been fitted with gas and occupied by E.W. Houghton. The spacious porch is the outstanding feature of the home and was added when front porches were in style. It was on this porch that Judge Henry Horner of Chicago made one of his informal speeches in August of 1932, during his successful bid for Governorship of Illinois. This was also the home of Judge A.E. Bergland who was a law partner in Bergland and Curtis Law firm until 1933. 217 NW 4th Avenue is currently the home of Mrs. Louis Murray.

(39) Peter Larson
409 NW 2nd Street

Peter Larson and his wife (she was the daughter of Olof Johnson, the Bishop Hill trustee who named Galva) built this home. Peter Larson was in the Dry Goods business for many years. Mrs. Larson founded the Tuesday Club in 1906, which was the forefunner of the Galva's Women's Club. This is currently the home of John Sloan.

NW 3rd Avenue

NW 3rd Avenue was also known as "Heaven Street" and "Milk Street". In 1889 a new gas lamp was put on the "cream" end of Milk Street.

(40) E.H. Fiedler
218 NW 3rd Ave

Built by E.H. Fiedler of Fiedler & Williams Insurance, Fiedler Variety Store and Larson and Fiedler Plumbing. He died in 1932. It is currently the home of Denny Tarleton, Galva Fire Chief.

(41) Dickinson
318 NW 3rd Ave

Built by Captain Dickinson, a Civil War Veteran. He was the first Superintendent of the Galva Water Works. It was the home of Thisbee Hawks for many years and is now the home of Robert Heck.

(42) D.E. Holmes
708 NW 3rd Ave

Mrs. Mary E. Holmes maintained Galva's first library in the room with the bay window at the left of the home. It is currently the home of Gerald Double.

(43) Reverend Rufus B. Guild
728 NW 3rd Ave

It was built by Reverend Guild who was the pastor of the First Congregational Church from 1864-1878. It was also the home of Hiram Higgins, an early grain dealer. For ten years it was the home of Randolph Boyd. In 1903 it was the home of Attorney Lawrence C. Johnson for 55 years. It is now the home of Bill Mergenthal.

(44) James H. Boyd
812 NW 3rd Ave

James H. & Charlotte Lyford Boyd moved into this home in 1891 after their marriage. Mr. Boyd was the 1922 President of Galva Heater Co. The co-owners were Randolph Boyd, Miss Anna Anderson & C.H. Lyford who was Charlotte's brother. It is the current home of Larry Collinson.

(45) Leon Best
814 NW 3rd Ave

Built by Leon & Alice Rebecca Boyd Best, daughter of James H. Boyd. Mr. and Mrs. Best were married in 1920 in her parent's home (#44). They celebrated their 50th Anniversary in this home. It is now the home of Stan & Chollie Ovitz-Kennaugh. Chollie is the granddaughter of Leon Best.

(46) Wolever House

108 NW 2nd Ave

First Hotel erected in 1854 by J. E. Wolever, later named Galva House. Still another name was Mead House, operated by R.H. Mead in the 1860's. There are unconfirmed reports that Abraham Lincoln once stayed there. It is the current home of Roger Manning. The resemblance of the foundation indicates that it was either remodeled or rebuilt on the foundation.

(47) Colonel Fuller

509 SW 3rd Street

Reported to be the first private dwelling in Galva. Erected by Colonel Fuller, Galva's first Station Agent. The original home was torn down in 1975. Then in 1976, Mac Miller built the new home on the site. Francis Thompson was first person to live in the new home.

(48) Bishop Hill Colony Boarding House & Hotel

415 SW 3rd Street

Built by the Bishop Hill Colony as a boarding house and hotel. Attorney John I. Bennett family occupied the home until 1902. It was later known as the Caldwell house. It is currently the home of Rick Otterstrom.

(49) Thomas E. Milchrist

16 NW 3rd Street

This was the home of Attorney Thomas E. Milchrist and his wife, the former Charlotte Ayres, in 1879. He was a Civil War veteran, served as an attorney in Galva for 23 years, was State's Attorney in 1872, Senator from 1898-1902. He resided in this home until 1890 when his brother in law and sister, Thomas H. and Catharine Milchrist Kelly moved here. After the death of Catharine in 1933, her daughters, Mrs. Charlotte Pratt and Miss Millie Kelly, continued to reside here until 1956. The home was sold to William G. Heiwig. The first telephone in Galva was installed in this home. It is currently the home of C.W. Deahl.

(50) Daniel Leverette Wiley

11 SE 6th Avenue

(Leverette Street)

One year after the founding of Galva, Daniel Leverette Wiley and his 21-year-old bride, the former Sarah Davis, both natives of Vermont, moved into their new home at the east edge of town where a year earlier they had seen deer on the prairie. Erected in 1855, it was one of the first homes built in Galva. It was built by George P. Burt, a uncle of Sarah Wiley. Daniel Wiley founded the First National Bank and Mr. Yocum was its president. Wiley was instrumental in getting the railroad through Galva. The house appears much as it did in its early years, and it still has the fireplace, which came from England. Repairs were made after the property was heavily damaged by fire in January 1922, one year before the death of Mrs. Wiley. The trees planted in the yard were brought as seedlings from Vermont. It became the home of E.W. Houghton in the 1920's; they ran a Midwest Dahlia Farm there. Mrs. Amy Houghton was D.L. Wiley's daughter. It is currently the home of Greg Peterson.